

In the Claims:

Claim 4 cancelled.

Amend claims 1, 10, 16 and 21-22 as shown below in the entire set of pending claims. Underlines indicate insertions, and ~~strikeouts~~ indicate deletions.

1 1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for tracking usage
2 information for a hard copy output device ~~an image forming device~~, comprising:
3 an image forming device; and
4 a tracking apparatus provided on the image forming device
5 and having:
6 processing circuitry associated with the image forming
7 device;
8 computer program code implemented on the processing
9 circuitry and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at delivered
10 as output by the image forming device and collected on a print job-by-
11 print job basis; and
12 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative
13 to store a data file containing user information, output job information,
14 and ~~the~~ usage information comprising total page area used and toner used
15 to cover the total page area used; and
16 a wherein the tracking apparatus is configured to implement
17 hybrid pull-push data gathering of transaction details from the image forming
18 device including consumable usage information.

1 2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the data file is a
2 census transaction data file comprising cost accounting information of
3 consumables utilized by the image forming device when generating output jobs.

1 3. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the
2 total page area comprises paper usage and the output job information comprises
3 information detailing a print job.

1 4. (Cancelled)

1 5. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 further
2 comprising a plurality of image forming devices, and wherein the tracking
3 apparatus polls the image forming devices to collect transaction details at each
4 of the image forming devices, and wherein at least one of the image forming
5 devices is configured to push the transaction details to the tracking apparatus, if
6 not polled, prior to a memory overflow event occurring on the at least one image
7 forming device.

1 6. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 5 further
2 comprising a user interface configured to receive unique user identification
3 information from a user at the image forming device, wherein the processing
4 circuitry receives the user identification information and merges the user
5 identification information with cost data upon job completion.

1 7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a
2 domain controller, wherein a user submits a print job to the image forming
3 device from the client computer, and wherein the domain controller verifies
4 identification of the user.

1 8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the image
2 forming device includes a user interface, and wherein a walk-up user submits a
3 copy job to the image forming device via the user interface.

1 9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the user
2 interface includes a reader operative to identify the walk-up user.

1 10. (Currently amended) A hard copy output device usable with
2 a local area network (LAN) and a client computer, comprising:

3 a tracking apparatus configured for use on a hard copy
4 output device having:

5 processing circuitry ~~communicating~~ associated with the hard
6 copy output device, configured to monitor page count delivered as output
7 by the hard copy output device and operative to receive LAN data
8 packets from the client computer over the LAN that identify a user and a
9 print job; and

10 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative
11 to store a data file containing the LAN data packets and consumable
12 usage information including actual toner usage; and

13 a wherein the tracking apparatus is configured to implement
14 hybrid pull-push data gathering of transaction details including consumable
15 usage information from the hard copy output device, the LAN includes a plurality
16 of hard copy output devices, and the tracking apparatus ~~being~~ is configured to
17 poll the plurality of hard copy output devices to collect the transaction details at
18 each of the hard copy output devices, and wherein at least one of the hard copy
19 output devices is configured to push the transaction details to the tracking
20 apparatus that is not polled prior to a memory overflow event occurring on the
21 at least one hard copy output device.

1 11. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the
2 consumable usage information comprises paper usage and toner usage collected
3 at the hard copy output device corresponding with print job completion.

1 12. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 11 further
2 comprises a user interface configured to enable a user to input a user
3 identification.

1 13. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein cost
2 information is collected at the hard copy output device on a print-job-by-print-job
3 basis.

1 14. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 wherein the hard
2 copy output device increments page counts to obtain cost information.

1 15. (Original) The hard copy device of claim 10 further
2 comprising an LDAP server and a local area network (LAN), wherein the LDAP
3 server maintains user information and is operative to implement consumable cost
4 recovery.

1 16. (Currently amended) A method of accounting for
2 consumable usage for an image forming device, comprising:
3 collecting data identifying a user and a print job;
4 storing the data in a memory of the image forming device;
5 generating a print job with the image forming device;
6 determining consumable usage data including ~~actual~~ toner usage
7 and page count delivered as output by at the image forming device on a print
8 job-by-print job basis;
9 storing the consumable usage data in the memory of the image
10 forming device in the form of a device data file including user information and
11 usage information; and
12 obtaining transaction details and consumable usage information
13 from the image forming device using a hybrid pull-push data gathering scheme
14 to transfer information with the device data file.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of
2 storing the consumable usage data in the memory comprises storing the page
3 usage and the toner usage in the memory associated with the data identifying
4 the user and the print job.

1 18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein the
2 data identifying a user and a print job comprises packet data including a user
3 login name and password.

1 19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the
2 step of collecting packet data is carried out at a client personal computer, and
3 further comprising generating a transaction data file including cost accounting
4 information and generating a data file in the memory of the image forming
5 device correlating the data identifying the user, the print job, and the cost
6 accounting information.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step of
2 generating a print job comprises requesting a print job from a client computer
3 and forwarding the request over a local area network to the image forming
4 device.

1 21. (Currently amended) An apparatus for tracking usage
2 information for an image forming device, comprising:
3 an image forming device; and
4 a tracking apparatus provided on the image forming device
5 and having:
6 processing circuitry associated with and provided within the
7 image forming device;
8 computer program code implemented on the processing
9 circuitry and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the
10 image forming device collected on a print job-by-print job basis;
11 ~~a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data~~
12 ~~gathering of transaction details including consumable usage information from the~~
13 ~~image forming device; and~~

14 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative
 15 to store a data file containing the user information, the output job
 16 information, and the usage information comprising total page area used
 17 and toner used;

18 a wherein the tracking apparatus is configured to implement
 19 hybrid pull-push data gathering of transaction details including consumable
 20 usage information from the image forming device; and wherein number of pages
 21 printed by the image forming device is determined by counting pages printed
 22 downstream of a fuser on an output side of the image forming device.

1 22. (Currently amended) An apparatus for tracking usage
 2 information for an image forming device, comprising:

3 a tracking apparatus configured for use on an image forming
 4 device and having:

5 processing circuitry associated with and provided within the
 6 image forming device;

7 computer program code implemented on the processing
 8 circuitry and operative to count page-area and toner coverage at the
 9 image forming device collected on a print job-by-print job basis;

10 ~~a tracking apparatus configured to implement hybrid pull-push data~~
 11 ~~gathering of transaction details from the image forming device including~~
 12 ~~consumable usage information;~~

13 memory coupled with the processing circuitry and operative
 14 to store a data file containing the user information, the output job
 15 information, and the usage information comprising total page area used
 16 and toner used for print jobs that are actually processed by the image
 17 forming device; and

18 a wherein the tracking apparatus is configured to implement
 19 hybrid pull-push data gathering of transaction details from the image forming
 20 device including consumable usage information; and wherein number of pages
 21 printed by the image forming device is determined by counting pages printed on
 22 an output side of a fuser of the image forming device.